

REVOLUTION

FIGHTING
PAPER FOR
WORKING
CLASS
YOUTH
ISSUE 12
10 PENCE

**More prisons for us
More profits for them...**

Tories are the real criminals!

THE TORIES are desperate. At this year's Tory party conference they had to do something - anything - to win back support.

Home Secretary Michael Howard got the conference cheering and stamping its feet with the oldest Tory trick in the book - "law and order" rhetoric appealing to the small-minded "hang 'em and flog 'em" brigade.

He called for longer prison sentences and for more prisons to be built. This, he said to wild cheers, will stop crime and put the fear of God into criminals.

This is all bigoted rubbish.

- Prisons and institutions for young offenders do not stop crime. Young people sent to prison learn far more about crime when they are inside than they would have known before. That's why 2 out of every 3 are back inside again with a couple of years.

- The real cause of crime is poverty. Everyone knows this is true - even the police chiefs admit it. But Howard and the Tories have to deny it. That way they can spend money that should be going towards jobs and decent benefits for youth on more prisons.

- Even Tory judges, including the Lord Chief Justice, say that longer sentences will not work. But Howard even



**Let's wipe the smile off
this bastard's face!**

2 WORK



Finger Lickin' Rip-Off!

“At Kentucky the shifts are really long, as much as 10 hours on Friday and Saturday nights when it's busiest. The thing is that we only get one 15 minute break, which is disgusting when you think about it. You haven't really got time to do anything in your break to get yourself back together before it's over and you're working again. A lot of workers don't want to say anything about it though, because at least we get paid for our break. I've heard it's even worse at McDonalds ... they get a 45 minute break, but they don't get paid for it!

The worst thing is the pay. It's so low - just £3.15 an hour, and new workers only get £3. It's a poverty wage - the European Union say that anything under £5.88 an hour is below the "decency" threshold. So its official - Kentucky's wages are indecent. And even this is not the worst pay I've ever seen. In my last job people worked through their breaks to get more pay, because the ordinary wages were only £2.30 an hour!

At the moment my pay works out at just £110 a week after tax, which isn't enough to cover anything much. I'm 21 now, and with wages like this I can't even think about saving up for anything. You constantly have to worry about every little thing, how to pay the bills, whether you can afford a few beers

Young workers get the crappiest jobs for the worst wages. And that's the way the bosses want it to stay. **Karen**, who works for Kentucky Fried Chicken in Coventry, spoke to **REVOLUTION** about how young workers are exploited at her workplace, and what she thinks can be done about it.

tions we work under are terrible. The work is so boring - people say I look like a zombie half the time. In the summer it gets very hot, with all the cooking going on, and the uniforms we have to wear just make it worse.

They're made of polyester, which is incredibly uncomfortable in the heat. I haven't worked there during the winter yet, but I'm not looking forward to it. Other workers say it gets really cold, especially because we're not allowed to wear socks or tights (don't ask me why!)

If you step out of line in any way then the managers can just swap your shifts around whenever they want, making you work say 3 shifts one week and then 7 the next.

That way they can pile the pressure on to workers they don't like, stopping them settling in to a routine. I've already seen them get rid of somebody like that. With the shifts being irregular, it keeps the workforce

when you go out and so on. The managers decide when your pay goes up to £3.15 - they just make the decision off the top of their heads. Workers are encouraged to keep quiet about it, so we are kept divided.

The condi-

separated, so you never really get to all meet together on a regular basis. That makes it much harder to organise the workers to stand up for themselves against the employers. It also makes it easier for the workers to be turned against each other.

Recently the managers discovered that the till was down - there was some money missing.

The worker who was suspected of it ended up blaming somebody else. It's difficult to get people to stick up for each other when we're so isolated from each other.

I've been thinking about what we could do about it, and I think the main thing we need is a union.

Nobody at Kentucky seems to know anything much about them. I know that various unions have been asked but they don't seem to want to do anything about helping us to organise.

The Transport and General Workers Union have said that we can join as individuals, but they won't come down and try to unionise the workplace as a whole.

The problem with them just saying we can join as ones and twos is that a lot of people might feel nervous about it, especially if the bosses find out and victimise them.

But it's not just that people don't want to stick their necks out.

The union won't say what workers would really get out of it if they joined.

So there's no enthusiasm for joining a union at the moment. But at the end of the day there's only one way to improve conditions at work, and that is to get organised.

If we all joined a union we'd be able to make demands for better pay and for a decent break - fully paid of course!

We'd also be able to call on the union for official support, which would make the bosses think twice about pushing us around.” ■

**END POVERTY
PAY!
£8 AN HOUR
MINIMUM
WAGE NOW!**



Stop the tests! Free Tahiti!

TAHITIAN YOUTH FIGHT FRENCH OCCUPATION

DOES ANYONE believe French President Chirac when he says his nuclear tests are harmless? Tests in the 1960s have already left their scars on the people of Polynesia - babies born with no limbs and a massive increase in cancer among the population.

But on 6 September the French government detonated a nuclear bomb on the Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific. The French government didn't give a shit about the cost in human life. If the tests are so safe why don't they do them in Paris?

France has dominated the Pacific Islands for over a hundred years. They plundered their natural resources and colonised islands like Tahiti. While the islanders live in poverty, the 350,000 whites in the area get the best jobs and live off the profits of French colonial rule.

The French government thought they could treat the people of Polynesia with contempt. But the workers and youth of Tahiti let the French know what they thought of their nuclear tests. With inspiring militancy, they took the streets to

show their anger. They weren't just angry about tests - for them it was yet another example of colonial barbarity. They are fighting for independence and an end to direct rule by the French government.

Greenpeace and CND have argued that a consumer boycott of French goods is the way to bring the French government to their knees. This is just naive. Consumer boycotts are not very effective. They rely on individual action rather than the power of collective action.

The action of the Tahitians shows how best to challenge the French government in the South Pacific. We must show our solidarity for their struggle against French imperialism.

Examples like the Australian dockers who refused to handle equipment necessary for the nuclear tests show that workers action can have a much greater effect than refusing to buy French

wine or cheese.

And anyway, what about the British bosses, who have access to the results of the tests to aid its own nuclear weapon research? They are just as bad.

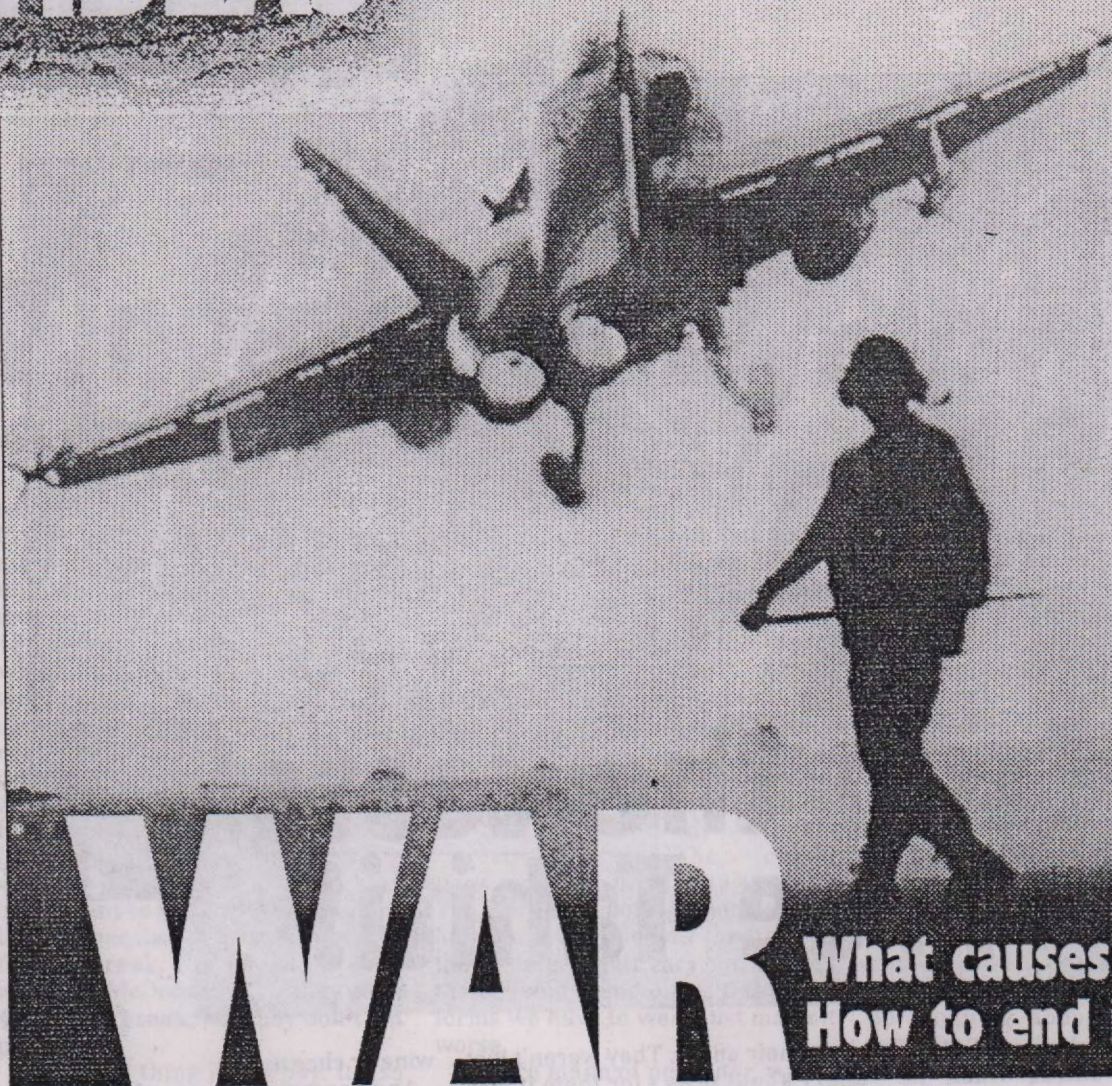
Young people must avoid blanket anti-French sentiments like the plague. When the Sun and other right-wing papers abuse French people and culture we should reject it. It is not the French people but the French Tory government that is responsible.

The French workers' strike against Chirac will do more to worry the capitalists and colonialists than any number of celebrities refusing to drink French champagne.

The action of the Tahitians shows how best to challenge the French government in the South Pacific. We must show our solidarity with their struggle against French imperialism.

Their victory in the fight for independence would be a blow not just against the Tests but also against the colonial system that makes them possible. ■

4 IDEAS



**What causes it?
How to end it...**

US PLANE TAKES OFF OVER BOSNIA: WHERE NEXT?

BOSNIA: Hundreds of thousands have spent the past two years amidst terror and barbarity: Families destroyed, women systematically raped, sons and daughters butchered. In multi-ethnic Bosnian cities defenceless citizens have faced a daily nightmare of shelling and destruction by racist Serb armies wanting an ethnically cleansed "Greater Serbia".

Rwanda: Hundreds of thousands butchered. Rivers literally choked with bodies. Thousands more fleeing for their lives from genocide, left starving and without proper sanitation and medicine in squalid refugee camps.

Despite claims by John Major and Bill Clinton that we are living in a "New World Order" of peace and stability, one look at the real world shows a different picture.

We are living in a world of disorder, bloodshed and misery, where vicious nationalism has lead to wars of eth-

nic cleansing and genocide. But that is not all. Across the globe, from the refugee camps of the Gaza Strip to Mexico and Kurdistan, workers, peasants and youth are fighting back against exploitation and brutality.

An estimated 100 million people have died in wars this century. But why? Is it because people just can't live together, is it in our nature to fight with each other? Or is it all down to a few power crazy dictators hell bent on military expansion and war?

These explanations are too simplistic. Wars are conflicts over material wealth, territory and resources. They raise the question: who will own and control the wealth of society?

At the start of this century the world was divided into on the one hand a few powerful nations such as Britain, Germany and France and on the other hand colonies such as India, Algeria and Egypt. The colonies were subjected to military

occupation, direct rule and daylight robbery by the major powers. In their quest for profits and markets, and using sheer force of arms, the governments of these rich capitalist nations divided up the world to secure protected markets for their goods and investments, access to resources and cheap labour.

This is what Marxists call Imperialism. It is a worldwide system in which a handful of countries dominate the "Third World" - the majority of the world's population - through military force and economic control. A hundred years ago imperialism was naked and undisguised - India was run by an appointed British dictator, the Viceroy of India. Today, many of the former colonies have been granted "independence", but real political and economic control still rests with the big Western banks and companies: these semi-colonial countries are in desperate poverty while at the same time they have to pay a fortune in debt repay-

ments and interest to the imperialist banks.

The most brutal and barbaric wars this century were the First and Second World Wars when the full might of the imperialists' war machines were let loose.

The First World War was a war between the great powers in Europe about who should control the rich resources of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Germany's economic expansion threatened the empires of Britain and France. So they sent millions of young workers to the killing fields to defend their colonial conquests. The Russian revolutionary Lenin explained the real character of the war:

"Picture to yourselves a slave-owner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slave-owner who owned 200 slaves for a more "just" distribution of slaves."

Historians and present day politicians would like us to believe that the Second World War was a war waged against fascism in Germany. This is a lie. Britain stood by while Hitler rose to power. All the European powers stood by when the Nazis began rounding up Jewish people, socialists and gays and sent them to the death camps. Only when it became clear to Britain and France that Germany's expansion would threaten their economic interests and colonies did they change their tune.

They tricked the masses into believing that the war against Germany was a war for democracy. But while they talked of democracy these very same governments maintained rule over their colonies such as India where there was no democracy at all.

The bosses never defended the rights of ordinary workers and peasants. What they defended was their property, privileges and profit.

The working class across the world were sent to kill each other while the capitalists made fortunes out of the war. In the name of "national unity" workers were expected to declare a truce in the class struggle, while the bosses were free to go on attacking workers wages, conditions and democratic rights.

Socialists did not support these wars. Unlike the Labour and trade union leaders, who at the time rallied to the side of the bosses and called for the "defence of the nation", socialists told the truth. They were wars between robbers who were fighting over who would have the biggest share of the loot, and because of this, workers should not support their governments. Workers in Britain had more in common with their fellow workers in Germany and

India than they did with their British bosses.

Revolutionary socialists declared: "The main enemy is at home! Turn your guns on your bosses, not your fellow workers and soliders. Turn this war of imperialist aggression into a civil war against profit, slavery and oppression!"

Socialists' attitude towards war is fundamentally different to those who consider themselves pacifists. This is because socialists recognise that for as long as class oppression and exploitation exist there will always be wars. So long as the drive for profit continues, the struggle for markets and domination of the world will take on a more and more destructive character.

Unlike pacifists we don't renounce all violence. We understand that war cannot be abolished until imperialism is overthrown and replaced with international socialism. If this could be done by pleading with the capitalists to put down their arms or by lighting joss sticks and singing "Give Peace a Chance", then war would have been abolished a long time ago.

But they won't give up without a fight. To abolish the real cause of wars we will need a violent revolution against the warmongers.

Revolutionary socialists oppose the militarism of the exploiters. But we support wars waged against imperialism and oppression.

The war fought heroically by the Vietnamese workers and peasants against the military might of the USA was a just war.

Millions of workers rallied to the side of the Vietnamese. Thousands of youth across Europe and the USA demonstrated against the war in Vietnam.

Anti-war students in the USA who condemned the role of the USA in Vietnam were repressed and even shot by the US state. The victory of the Vietnamese against the USA proved it was possible to fight back

against economic exploitation and military aggression. It showed that the "world policeman" was not invincible.

Today socialists have to oppose the wars of the imperialist powers whenever they take place.

We insist that not a penny and not a person should be sacrificed for wars for profit. But we support just wars against oppression, imperialism and racist genocide. "Turn the other cheek" is not a revolutionary principle. To liken the violence of the slaveowner who puts a slave in chains with the violence of the slave who breaks the chains is nothing but pathetic cowardice.

That is why we side with semi-colonial countries like Iraq and Argentina when they come into conflict with imperialism, and with movements for national independence like the Irish, Kurdish and Palestinian freedom fighters.

We support the youth in Tahiti who are fighting against the French conquest of their country. We back the Bosnian forces who are fighting against the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Serbs.

At the same time we oppose the imperialist hypocrites of the NATO powers, who have disarmed the Bosnians and are now bombing the Serbs to force all sides into an unjust settlement which will still leave Bosnia carved up along ethnic lines.

The road to real peace is the road of class war.

We have to fight to rid society of imperialism and replace it with a world socialist federation, in which the resources of the planet can be democratically planned for the benefit of everyone, and where there will be no rich capitalists to set us against each other on national, "ethnic" or racial lines. Only socialism can stop war.

Our loyalty is not to "our own" exploiters, but to the workers of the world and the future of humanity.★



6 FRANCE

? What do you think about the possibility of a new fightback by the youth

Arnaud: In our University we're leading a student fightback. We've been able to mobilise hundreds of students against the threat to housing benefit and to generalise the movement to other attacks against our living standards. What's more important, we've taken the student movement to the trade unions. We've got workers from the campus to come and speak to our mass meetings, and have pushed the need for a joint fightback of workers and youth against the government's attacks.

On Monday the Minister of Labour and the Minister for Higher Education are coming to Rennes. We've got a number of unions, including the railway workers, to give them a hot reception! We're also going to try and link up our movement with the fight at Rouen. By spreading the action and linking up with the public sector workers who have been striking in their millions, we may be able to really shake the government.

Fabienne: Now that Chirac is in power social problems have got much worse. In the past student demonstrations have been relatively well behaved, although there have been some violent confrontations with the police. But things could go much further this time around. Youth unemployment is getting worse and worse, and last year those unemployed youth began to be involved in the demonstrations. We need to find ways of organising them and giving them political answers.

Régis: Two years ago the government got a big shock when students and youth took to the streets against an attempt to cut youth wages. They've learned their lesson and are trying not to provoke a response. This has been shown by the fact that when a right-wing deputy (MP) proposed cutting housing benefit for youth, the government got him to withdraw it for fear of provoking a fightback.

The situation is becoming increasingly polarised. For example, the university of Rouen has incredible overcrowding and a budget deficit of £1.2 million which the government is refusing to pay for. Yet at the

same time loads of public money has been put into a private university for rich kids set up by the right-wing racist politician Charles Pasqua, where there are only 30 students on each course!

? What do you think about the bombs on the Paris metro?

Fabienne: They're allegedly the work of the Groupe Islamique Armé, a reactionary group of Algerian Islamic fundamentalists, who are protesting against France's support for the military government in Algeria. The GIA have the support of some immigrant youth who, have taken refuge in ultra-right wing religious ideas because they see no future for themselves in French society. The government has responded by launching a massive security campaign. To get into the university everyone has to show their student ID and open their bags so that the security guards can check. Parents aren't allowed into primary schools! There are police everywhere; the railway stations are full of soldiers. And they still haven't stopped a single bomb from going off!

Régis: I'm not worried about the bombs, but one of my classmates runs through the corridors of the metro so she won't be killed! Much more importantly, the government's



FUCK OFF CHIRAC!

France came to a standstill in October as 5 million workers launched a one day general strike against the government's freeze on workers' pay. The transport system, factories and offices stopped and 500,000 workers marched through Paris in protest.

French Tory President Jacques Chirac is reeling under pressure from the workers, international protests against nuclear tests in the South Pacific, riots against the French occupation of Haiti and a campaign of terrorist bombings by Islamic activists against French support for the military dictatorship in Algeria.

REVOLUTION interviewed **Fabienne** (20, Paris), **Régis** (17, Paris) and **Arnaud** (19, Rennes), from our sister organisation in France.

security mania has lead to an increase in racism, which was already pretty strong. Black people are harassed the most, including at school and university.

? Is the fascist Le Pen's "Front National" gaining from this situation?

Arnaud: The really worrying thing is that the government will stoke up racism and that the FN will be able to take important steps forward in its project of building a mass fascist party. They took control of three important towns during the municipal elections last June. At the moment the government is completely discredited. There is a real political vacuum, with neither the Socialist Party nor the Communist Party making any attempts to mobilise any kind of fightback. The FN could end up appearing as the only party with any answers. We need to use every possibility we have not only to fight for unity of all youth and workers - black and white,

employed and unemployed - against the government's economic attacks, we also need to mobilise everyone to confront the FN and its racism. Without an organised response from the working class movement, the FN could come out much stronger. That's why it's so important for revolutionaries to carry our arguments into the current wave of struggles. We need to lay the basis for a new revolutionary party. That way we'll be able to finish off both Le Pen and Chirac! ■

E is for exploitation?

7

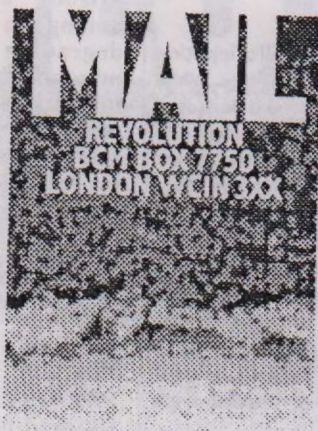
Dear REVOLUTION,

There have been some drug scares recently, following the death of a young lad mixing E and whiz. Because of this there have been raids on several clubs, including Club UK in South London where the police stormed in, searching everybody and arresting 12. This just ignores the real problems with drugs.

Draw, trips, speed and E are the biggest drugs for youth today. We take drugs as a break from school or work. They are taken by millions every week and are often a lot cheaper than alcohol. The problem is not the number

of people taking them but the lack of decent information about them: what is in them, proper health advice and resources, such as water at clubs, provided for free.

We all know that keeping drugs illegal does not work. It did not work in the 1930s with the American 'Prohibition' of alcohol and it's not working today. What it does do



is allow big-time dealers to cut E with shit like fish tank cleaning powder and dog worming tablets. If this is supposed to be safer for us, the government have got no idea about

health! The "drug problem" is not something that can be solved by arresting small-time dealers. To solve it, all drugs have to be legalised! This would make sure that all drugs

are tested for purity, like they do for Ecstasy in Holland. When adverts for an E test kit went up in Manchester, the kit was automatically banned, denying us the right to check the purity of pills.

Full legalisation would also allow youth sound facts on health, so we know how many pills are safe to take and how much water we should drink. This would mean that clubs would have to put in free water taps and not con £2 out of us for a poxy bottle of water.

This is just another example of being exploited for having a good time.

• Jimmy, South London.

Progress—a thing of the past?

Dear REVOLUTION,

A lot of young people today seem to think that science and progress are bad things. Pollution, nuclear tests, and the chaos of the modern world have convinced thousands of youth that we should put a stop to "progress" and go back to a 'golden age' when life was supposed to be simple and human beings supposedly lived in harmony with nature.

I think this is a dangerous way of looking at things. Developments in science, medicine and technology are very important. Progress is not just about pollution, dirt and illness. We have seen, to give just a few examples, new treatments for life-threatening illnesses, world-wide satellite link-ups, the Internet, and a greater and greater understanding of how the human body and genetics work.

The problem is not science itself - without it we would all still be living in prehistoric poverty. Take

the science of medicine. Instead of ignorant quack cures like drilling holes in patients' heads to get rid of headaches and migraines or the use of bat wings to get rid of viruses, we now have modern hospitals and drugs which are proved to work.

The problem is that new technology and scientific breakthroughs are almost always discovered and used not to benefit humanity, but simply to make money for the rich bosses, or to increase the power of the military and the capitalists.

Some of the things that modern science makes possible are just not provided for the mass of the people - like when the Tories cut back on hospital beds and refuse to pay out for scanning machines and other medical appliances.

What is hidden from us is how these discoveries have been made (as well as the profits made by the super-rich, like the drug company bosses). These

"business secrets" are undisclosed for two reasons. One is to hide new discoveries from competitor companies.

The other is to keep the public completely out of the process (until we have to pay for the finished products).

I am opposed to the system which puts profit over and above the needs and wants of normal people. There are loads of companies and laboratories world-wide investigating and developing new drugs.

But competition means that they cannot share their information, even though this would bring about new cures and treatments much more quickly. Instead of this money-grabbing competition I think business secrets should be abolished.

If the drug companies were nationalised and merged into one, without a penny of 'compensation' to the millionaire bosses, it would unite all the resources needed to

research and develop necessary medicines, such as an AIDS cure. The problem is not modern science, but the capitalist profit system.

A socialist system, in which the big factories and companies were owned and controlled democratically by the working class, would allow production for what is actually wanted, not what is going to make the largest profit for the individual companies.

This won't mean that we will have less choice, it means that the best products will be made and that people will be able to choose what they really want much more freely than they can today.

Every new development will allow us to reduce the working day instead of resulting in workers being sacked as it does today. In our hands, those of the oppressed youth and the mass of the working class, technology will be used for the benefit of the masses.

• Ken, Bristol.

REVO

ONE SOLUTION: REVOLUTION!

We live in a world full of injustice, oppression and poverty. While millions starve, food is destroyed in order to keep its price up. The latest technology in health care cannot be used in many countries because of the payment of foreign debt.

Even the most basic provisions of a good water supply and decent

sanitation are denied to people all around the world. Meanwhile ever greater ecological disasters loom on the horizon.

Revolution does not believe there is anything 'natural' about the terrible state of the world. We believe that what is happening is because of the world wide system of capitalism.

It is a system that runs with the sole intention of making money for a tiny handful of capitalists who own and control industry and the land.

We believe that it is possible to create a new and better world system, a socialist system. It would be an international system which means the fight to achieve it must be international. Workers Power (Britain) is part of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International that includes revolutionaries from all over the world.

Because we are internationalists we support all struggles by people oppressed by imperialism - including the struggle to get British troops out of Ireland.

Because we are internationalists we oppose imperialist militarism: we say not a penny or a person for the defence of this system.

A socialist system would be based on common ownership of the land, the factories, offices, transport and communication systems. It would organise society to provide the necessities and luxuries of life for all according to a democratically worked out plan.

This means instead of having people homeless because the privately owned land and building companies only build houses when they can make money, we will all own the land, collectively and we will plan that to use the bricks that lie unused and the building workers who are unemployed to build the homes needed.

To get this, industry and land will have to be taken out of the hands of the few. But this group of people, the ruling class, will never allow us to do this without a fight. The government is prepared to mobilise thousands of police to attack raves, demonstrations and picket lines. Just imagine what they would be prepared to do to protect their whole system of wealth and power. That is why we believe we need a workers revolution.

But we cannot wait until then, we have to fight against exploitation and oppression now. We support all workers' struggles. We support the struggles against women's oppression, racism and homophobia.

Whether it is workers on strike, women fighting for abortion rights or black people fighting against racism it is often young people who are leading these struggles.

We fight for action that will win and in such a way that the struggles of today can prepare us for the revolution of tomorrow. We try to turn today's struggles into a struggle for power by fighting for workers control, workers self-defence etc.

Revolution stands in the tradition of over 150 years of revolutionary socialism. Our movement is based on the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, applied to today's conditions.

Revolution aims to build a revolutionary youth movement, to win thousands and thousands of youth to supporting and building a revolutionary party that can lead the working class to power.

So don't just sit there sell Revolution and become a Revolution supporter! ★

REVOLUTION is produced by
youth supporters of WORKERS POWER.

wants to remove the right of prisoners to earn remission of their sentences. Prison conditions are among the worst and most degrading in Europe with prisoners having to shit in buckets and then "slop out" in the morning. Imagine sleeping in an overcrowded cell with other peoples' excrement!

Howard told the Tory conference conditions should be "decent but austere" which means he wants it to stay that way!

SCRAP RACIST CONTROLS!

Howard is also attacking the rights of immigrants and blaming them for society's problems. Under new proposals, the employers in the health service, schools and local government services have got to carry out "checks" among their workforce for "illegal immigrants".

Employers will be fined if they employ workers who turn out to be "illegally" in Britain.

This will unleash a wave of terrible harassment of black workers.

Employers will be much less likely to take black and foreign workers on in the first place.

Workers who have escaped from poverty and oppression in Nigeria, Turkey, Latin America and elsewhere will be victimised, rounded up, imprisoned and thrown out of Britain.

REVOLUTION says that Howard's racist law must be fought.

• Trade unions and workers must refuse to carry out these racist checks and take strike action against any employer who tries to threaten and force them into doing it.

• The unions and black and white workers and youth must fight for the abolition of all "internal controls". Labour wants to pose as opponents of racism. They should come out clearly and say that when they win the next election the controls will be scrapped.

• All immigration controls are racist, preventing workers from moving freely around the world and making black people into so-called "aliens".

We blame the system not the victims.

Immigration controls should be scrapped - for a world without borders and racist discrimination. ■



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